

Congress of the United States
Washington, DC 20515

December 21, 2017

The Honorable Jeff Sessions
U.S. Department of Justice
950 Pennsylvania Avenue, NW
Washington, DC 20530

Dear Attorney General Sessions:

We write in opposition to the Department of Justice's (DOJ) decision to add compliance with federal immigration priorities as a factor in receiving critical law enforcement grants, including the Byrne Justice Assistance Grant (Byrne JAG) Program and the Community Oriented Policing Services (COPS) Hiring Program. These funds are vital to law enforcement's efforts to keep our communities safe. We strongly urge the DOJ to remove any certification requirements or grant preferences related to federal immigration priorities, so as not to impact the ability of our state and local officers to protect their communities.

The COPS Hiring and Byrne JAG programs are the cornerstone of our federal justice assistance programs. Since their inception, these critical federal funding streams provide state and local law enforcement with necessary resources to form vital partnerships among communities and law enforcement officers, prevent and reduce crime and terrorism, and develop and implement problem-solving and crime prevention programs nationwide. These grants provide funding for the implementation of state and local initiatives, technical assistance, training, personnel, and equipment.

As you know, DOJ was scheduled to disburse over \$257 million in Byrne JAG funds to each state and six territories in the United States. To date the DOJ has not disbursed these funds. We are concerned that additional delays in providing these funds will undermine state and local law enforcement's efforts to keep our communities safe. We understand the cause of the delay is related to litigation over the new federal immigration law requirements DOJ placed on potential Byrne JAG recipients. However, delaying these funds is punishing the law enforcement officers on the ground doing their jobs and trying to keep their communities safe. In fact, any delay in getting these much-needed resources to law enforcement jeopardizes their ability to maintain law and order and do their jobs effectively. As a result, communities across our nation remain more at risk every day because state and local officers don't have access to these funds. Therefore, we urge you to release these funds as soon as possible.

Further, we understand the DOJ gave preference to COPS Hiring Program applications that certified compliance with federal immigration priorities. This type of preference penalizes law enforcement and the citizens they serve in order to force a policy change outside of law enforcement's control. It is civilian local governments, not police departments, who make the

laws. Law enforcement officers do not have the luxury of picking and choosing which laws to enforce, nor should they.

These critical federal funding streams were intended for underfunded and understaffed police departments have the staff and resources to maintain public safety. However, making receipt of these grants contingent on compliance with federal immigration priorities puts these same local departments, who are already struggling due to a lack of resources, in a position where they cannot effectively do their job.

Thank you for your attention to this matter. We look forward to working with you to support local law enforcement and ensure they have the resources needed to keep all of us safe.

Sincerely,



Bill Pascrell, Jr.
Member of Congress



Dave Reichert
Member of Congress



Alma Adams
Member of Congress



Earl Blumenauer
Member of Congress



Suzanne Bonamici
Member of Congress



Julia Brownley
Member of Congress



G. K. Butterfield
Member of Congress



Michael Capuano
Member of Congress



Salud O. Carbajal
Member of Congress



Tony Cárdenas
Member of Congress



André Carson
Member of Congress




Judy Chu
Member of Congress



David N. Cicilline
Member of Congress



Yvette Clarke
Member of Congress



Jim Costa
Member of Congress



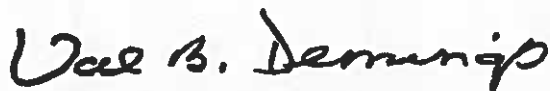
Elijah Cummings
Member of Congress



Danny K. Davis
Member of Congress



Rosa L. DeLauro
Member of Congress



Val Demings
Member of Congress



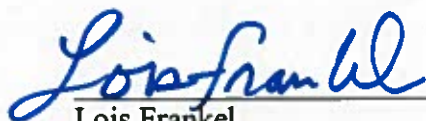
Mark DeSaunier
Member of Congress



Nanette Diaz Baragán
Member of Congress



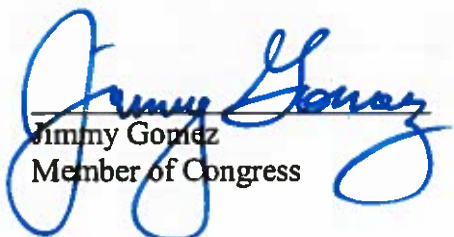
Eliot L. Engel
Member of Congress



Lois Frankel
Member of Congress



Tulsi Gabbard
Member of Congress



Jimmy Gomez
Member of Congress



Vicente Gonzalez
Member of Congress



Josh Gottheimer
Member of Congress



Colleen Hanabusa
Member of Congress



Denny Heck
Member of Congress



Eleanor Holmes Norton
Member of Congress



Sheila Jackson Lee
Member of Congress



Ro Khanna
Member of Congress



Peter T. King
Member of Congress



Lujan Grisham
Member of Congress



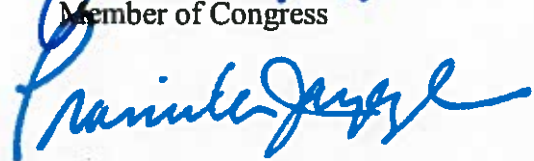
Alcee L. Hastings
Member of Congress



Brian Higgins
Member of Congress



Jared Huffman
Member of Congress



Pramila Jayapal
Member of Congress



Derek Kilmer
Member of Congress



James Langevin
Member of Congress



John Larson
Member of Congress




Sander Levin
Member of Congress



John Lewis
Member of Congress



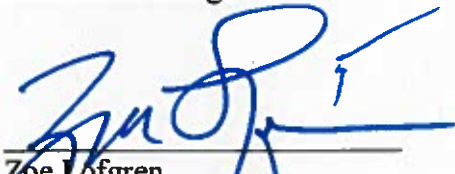
Ted W. Lieu
Member of Congress



Dan Lipinski
Member of Congress



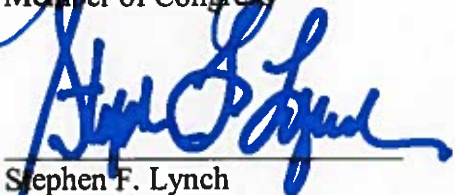
Frank A. LoBiondo
Member of Congress



Zoe Lofgren
Member of Congress



Alan Lowenthal
Member of Congress



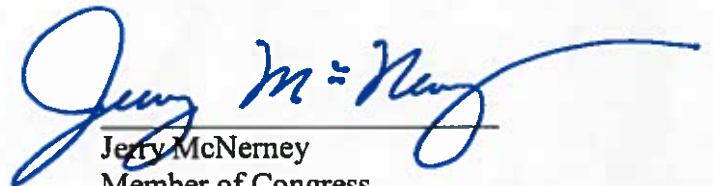
Stephen F. Lynch
Member of Congress



Doris Matsui
Member of Congress



James P. McGovern
Member of Congress



Jerry McNerney
Member of Congress



Seth Moulton
Member of Congress



Ferrol Nadler
Member of Congress




Grace Napolitano
Member of Congress





Donald Norcross
Member of Congress


Tom O'Halleran
Member of Congress

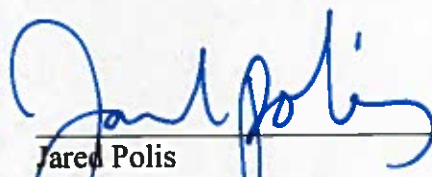

Frank Pallone, Jr.
Member of Congress


Jimmy Panetta
Member of Congress



Sean Patrick Maloney
Member of Congress



Donald Payne, Jr.
Member of Congress



Ed Perlmutter
Member of Congress


Jared Polis
Member of Congress


David Price
Member of Congress


Mike Quigley
Member of Congress

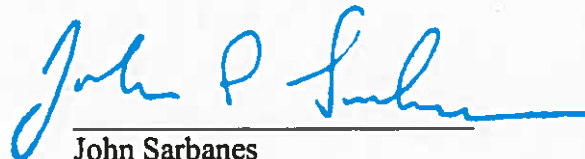

Jamie Raskin
Member of Congress


Cedric Richmond
Member of Congress


Lucille Roybal-Allard
Member of Congress



Linda T. Sánchez
Member of Congress



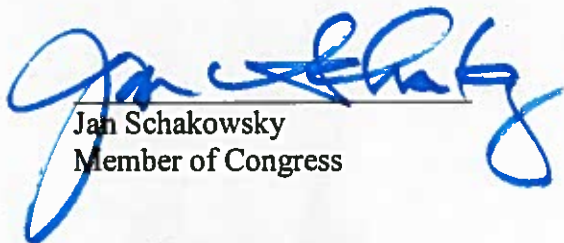
John Sarbanes
Member of Congress



Bobby L. Rush
Member of Congress



Tim Ryan
Member of Congress



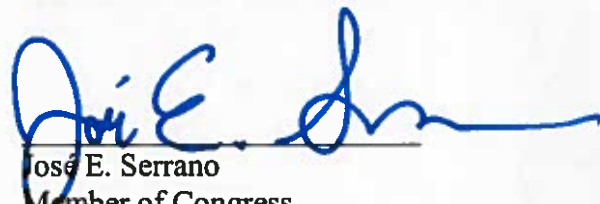
Jan Schakowsky
Member of Congress



Kurt Schrader
Member of Congress



Robert C. "Bobby" Scott
Member of Congress



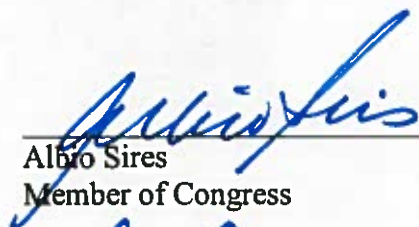
José E. Serrano
Member of Congress



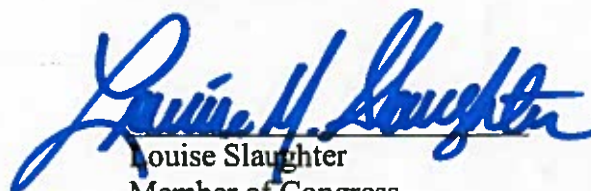
Terri Sewell
Member of Congress



Carol Shea-Porter
Member of Congress



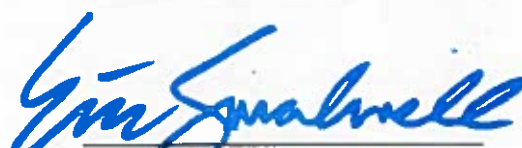
Albio Sires
Member of Congress



Louise Slaughter
Member of Congress



Adam Smith
Member of Congress



Eric Swalwell
Member of Congress



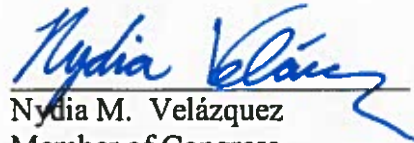
Dina Titus
Member of Congress



Norma Torres
Member of Congress



Niki Tsongas
Member of Congress



Nydia M. Velázquez
Member of Congress



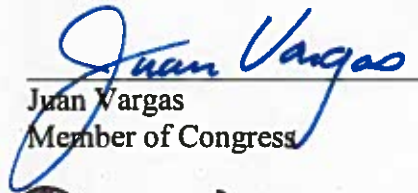
Debbie Wasserman Schultz
Member of Congress



Peter Welch
Member of Congress



John Yarmuth
Member of Congress



Juan Vargas
Member of Congress



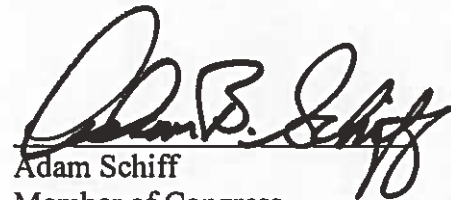
Peter J. Visclosky
Member of Congress



Bonnie Watson Coleman
Member of Congress



Frederica Wilson
Member of Congress



Adam Schiff
Member of Congress